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ABSTRACT

A pilot case study addressed how a reader engages aesthetically with text. The main thrust theoretically is from the notion that "there are possible worlds other than the one we inhabit." Four subjects were chosen out of a total of 63 subjects in grades four through six in an elementary school in Western Canada. Out of the four subjects, Bradley was chosen as the key informant for the study. He was interviewed for his views on reading, then read silently and responded to a series of questions. Bradley also read and responded to a number of pieces of his own writing. An examination of Bradley's responses revealed that it is the reader's stance which is crucial in allowing the reader access to the possible world of the text. Stance is reflected in the reader's ability to be tentative and open minded. Stance markers include the reader's use of modal auxiliaries in their talk about possible worlds. Readers' ability to talk eloquently about the journey is a reflection of their sense of involvement. Through their encounters with these "possible worlds," readers transform and are transformed by "the ordinary and conventionally given" world of the text. (Two tables are included nd 35 references are attached.) (Author/RS)

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RESEARCHING RESPONSE TO LITERATURE:

A PILOT STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The question as to how a reader engages aesthetically with text is addressed in this pilot study. The theoretical background for this case study of four readers reading is drawn from a number of differing perspectives: Beach's (1985) discourse convention, Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional model of reading, Iser's (1978) notion of virtual text, and Bruner's (1986) notion of possible worlds. The main thrust theoretically is from the notion of possible worlds, specifically from the works of Lewis (1986), Stalnaker (1984), Piper (1987), Coates (1990), and others. It is this concept, that "there are possible worlds other than the one we inhabit," which is used to argue that readers who encounter text are engaged in possible worlds exploration.

Four subjects were chosen out of a total of 63 subjects in Grades 4 - 6 in an elementary school in Western Canada. Out of the four subjects, Bradley was chosen as the key informant for the study. He was interviewed for his view on reading and was then given a chapter from The Great Gilly Hopkins (Paterson, 1978) to read silently and to respond to a series of questions about the chapter entitled "The Visitor." Once this was done, Bradley was asked to read and to respond to a number of pieces of his own writing. An examination of Bradley's responses revealed that it is the reader's stance which is crucial in allowing the reader access to the possible world of the text. Stance is reflected in the reader's ability to be tentative and open-minded. Stance markers include the reader's use of model auxiliaries in their talk about possible worlds. In addition, readers must learn to become engaged with text. Such involvement is only possible when readers are able to commit themselves to the journey. Again, their ability to talk eloquently about the journey is a reflection of their sense of involvement. Finally, through their encounters with these "possible worlds," readers transform and are transformed by "the ordinary and conventionally given" world of the text.

Introduction

Corcoran (1988) sees the "problem and promise of reader-response" as one which concerns readers, texts and contexts. In his view, reader-response "acknowledges the significance of all three and accords equal importance to the ways in which both readers and texts construct and are constructed by each other in particular contexts" (p. 39). What this means for Corcoran is that teachers will have to pay close attention to three basic questions: "How do readers make meaning?" "How do texts instruct their readers on how to read and write them?" "How are both readers and texts the products of cultural contexts for reading and writing?" (ibid., p. 39).

The questions posed by Corcoran provide a basis for analyzing the essential features of reader-response theory and, as such, they will help to focus the ensuing/following discussion of how readers structure worlds of discourse.

How Do Readers Make Meaning? A Review of the Literature

What takes place when we read a text? Does the reader simply react to the visual array or does he/she indeed engage in what Goodman (1967) calls "a psycholinguistic guessing game"? The real answer is that one can never completely know what takes place when we read stories. What seems evident, though, is that the proponents of top down and bottom up theories of the reading process have left out an important aspect of the reading act. Rosenblatt (1978) highlights this deficiency when she talks about

the reader's evocation of the text. Her views reflect a somewhat different, though related, perspective on the reader's contribution to the reading act through the reader's "transactional" relationship with the text.

Rosenblatt's Transactional View of Reading

At the heart of Rosenblatt's view is the notion that meaning is not "contained" in the text, but is derived from an interaction between the content and structure of the author's message and the experience and prior knowledge of the reader. Following hard upon this notion is the view that readers comprehend differently because every reader is culturally and individually unique. In this respect, examining readers' response to text is more valid than establishing one "correct" interpretation of text meaning (Chase and Hynd, 1987).

The aforementioned "assumptions" reflect, in a general sense, the basic tenets of reader response theory. Since Rosenblatt's position on reader response is a particular one, it is important to delineate the distinctions she has made regarding the nature of the reader's response. Rosenblatt (1985) has, in fact, presented seven "transactional concepts" which are listed in Table 1.

From her perspective the text should be looked upon as a constraint on the reader's activity, rather than as a norm which everyone should try to approach in the same way (Evans, 1985, pp. 26-27). She puts this relationship in the following way, "Instead of functioning as a rigid mould, the text is seen to serve

Table 1

Rosenblatt's Transactional Concepts
(in Cooper, 1985, p. 40)

Concern with research on response to literature and the teaching of literature requires clarification of the underlying theoretical model, since that model influences the questions we ask, the formulation of hypotheses, and the research methods used to test them. It affects the teaching situations we study and the criteria of evaluation we apply. Briefly, these are:

- The concept of reading as an event involving a particular reader, a particular text, at a particular time, under particular circumstances.

- The concept of the transaction between reader and text as a reciprocal process in contrast to notions of the passive reader acted on by the text, or the passive text acted on by the reader.

- The concept of stance of focus of attention, which leads the reader to select from a broader or narrower range of the elements of consciousness activated in transaction with the text.

- The concept of the efferent transaction in which the reader's selective attention during the reading is focused mainly on the public referents of the words, on the ideas being developed for retention after the reading.

- The concept of the aesthetic transaction in which the reader's attention during the reading is focused on his or her lived-through evocation of the literary work.

- The concept of the evocation: the aesthetic transaction with the text is a process in which the reader selects out ideas, sensations, feelings, and images drawn from his past linguistic, literary, and life experience, and synthesizes them into a new experience, the evocation - the poem, story, novel, or play.

- The concept of the response to the evocation, generated during and after the aesthetic transaction (p. 40).

as a pattern which the reader must to some extent create even as he is guided by it" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 130).

Another aspect of the theory has to do with the reader's activity while actually reading. Here, what is important for teachers of reading is the necessary interest in what is going through the reader's mind while he/she is engaged in the act of reading. Essentially, it is during this process that teachers should come to the awareness that each reader's response is a unique one, not necessarily a wrong one. As Rosenblatt (1978) puts it, "the reader contemplates his own shaping of his responses to the text, a far from passive kind of contemplation" (p. 31).

Finally, we need to see that Rosenblatt's emphasis is on the notion of "transaction". In her view, it is the transaction which takes place between the reader and the text which results in the poem. The poem must here be construed as a lived through experience. It is not the concrete set of words arranged in a particular order. Neither can this process be seen as an interactive process (cf. Rumelhart, 1985). As she puts it, "The intrinsic value of a literary work of art resides in the reader's living through the transaction with the text" (p. 132).

Iser's "Act of Reading"

Iser's (1978) views on reader response takes the position that the literary work has two poles: "the artistic pole is the author's text, and the aesthetic is the realization accomplished by the reader" (quoted in Evans, 1980, p. 106). The literary work is,

in Iser's view, the virtual text and for Iser "virtual" is used in much the same way that Susanne Langer does, where, to call something "virtual" suggests and acknowledges that it is not altogether "real" - it lives somewhere outside the world of things we can touch and smell and measure. There is also the suggestion here that it (the text) has some special power, some "virtue", beyond what the matter-of-fact words of the text can offer (Evans, 1987, p. 26).

Iser further describes a set of structures that enable the reader to define the essential conditions governing the interaction which takes place between reader and text. Iser refers to these "types" of interaction as "filling the blanks", "negation", and "wandering viewpoint".

The notion of blank comes from social psychology (Evans, 1987). For example, whenever we encounter someone new, there exists between us an aura of uncertainty, an unpredictability. I cannot completely experience another's experience; nor can a stranger completely understand what I am about. There are "gaps" in our relationship and we "fill" these gaps according to the social situation or conventions in operation at the time of our meeting. For example, if we have met at the Faculty Club, we can assume some sort of special relationship, i.e., that we are colleagues within the same academic setting and, if not, our conversation will help to tease out some of the similarities and/or differences. To fill in these gaps, though, we need to take into account the other person. To do otherwise is to run the risk of

misinterpreting who the person is we have just met. We cannot identify (or come to know) a person strictly on the basis of our own projections.

It is precisely this point Iser makes about texts. Texts, according to Iser, are full of gaps, gaps which have been put there deliberately by the author and it is the task of the reader to fill these gaps (called blanks by Iser) in order to complete the picture and to come to a fuller understanding of the text.

In Iser's view, then, when the reader's mind encounters the blanks in a text, an "act of constitution" takes place, and ostensibly the text comes to life in the reader's engagement with that text. In effect, reading a work of art is not so much the contemplation of an "object we hold in our hands as we read" (Evans, 1987, p. 33); rather it is "the living experience" that finds its fulfilment in our minds as we enter the world of the text. And what is crucial here is not so much contained in the words of the text but in the blanks between the words; blanks which call, not for completion, but for combination. Hence, when we read, we are presented with segments of text: sentences, passages of description or dialogue, chapters. Within each of these segments we find the theme of our reading and it is from these themes that we attempt to predict the future course of the narrative, and to build up horizons for our view (Evans, ibid., p. 33). This movement from one segment to the next becomes part of the receding background. In this way, our reading is "corrected" as we move along and the whole act of reading is constituted by

this experiencing of the text - by a building up of the total imaginative experience, a building process involving the meeting between our lives (as readers) and the text as we encounter it.

Iser (1978) reminds his readers that the reading and writing of a novel is very much like a journey in a stage coach. He views a literary text in somewhat the same manner as one would view a painting or a piece of sculpture wherein a painting or a piece of sculpture can never be perceived entirely at any one time (Evans, 1987, p. 36). For Iser, the reader builds his/her impression of the work in terms of "a moving viewpoint which travels along inside that which it has to apprehend" (Iser, 1978, p. 108-809).

Part of this notion is tied to Iser's use of "blanks in the text". In Iser's view, as we read, we see the characters, locations, and tendencies of the literary work from one perspective. However, as we continue to read, these varying perspectives become meshed together, sometimes lending assent to and sometimes disagreeing with the assumptions we make as we read. Blanks function here by giving us a chance to link together these varying perspectives thereby helping us to understand the larger picture being presented to us.

The notion of "negation", on the other hand, has to do with unusual behaviour of any kind (in the text) which negates the reader's expected view of things and thereby leads the reader to participate (actively) in the creation of the novel with its new or novel "interpretation". Hence, novels serve us well when they challenge our (and society's) established norms or ways of doing

things. In Bridge to Terabithia (Paterson), for example, conventional norms are challenged when Leslie is able to beat the boys in class in a foot race. This allows the reader to gain fresh insights into the behaviour of girls and, in terms of events in the novel, this event permits Jess to establish a special relationship with Leslie.

Iser's view of reading is in sharp contrast to traditional views of reading, perspectives which held to the view that there was a fixed interpretation, that there was one fixed meaning which could best be determined under the guidance of an authority (Mailloux, in Moran and Penfield, 1990). As Bruner (1986) puts it, "One rereads a story in endlessly changing ways - litera, moralis, allegoria, anagogia. The alternate ways of reading may battle one another, marry one another, mock one another in the reader's mind...while the reader begins by placing a story in one genre (and that may have powerful effects on his reading), he changes as he goes. The actual text is unchanged; the virtual text (to paraphrase Iser) changes almost moment to moment in the act of reading" (p. 7).

Beach's Discourse Conventions

Beach (in Cooper, 1985) discusses the reader's use of conventions from the perspective of speech act theory and discourse conventions. Essentially, his view of response is predicated on attempts to understand how readers use their knowledge of conversation to make inferences about dialogue in literature, a

premise which is at the basis of this paper and its claims.

One of the basic aspects of Beach's use of discourse conventions is his incorporation of the notion of the reader's use of "tacit" knowledge of discourse conventions of written text. By "tacit" knowledge, Beach is here referring to "knowing how" or "knowing with" competence, both in terms of understanding written discourse and in producing it. The notion of tacit will arise in subsequent discussions of the reader's response to written text. But first, a few comments are needed about the use of the term "conventions".

In his discussion of speech act, social, and literary conventions, Beach borrows from Steinmann & Brown (in Beach, 1985, p. 104) to define conventions as "decisions or agreements by humans to behave under certain conditions in certain ways". As Beach states, "conventions both constitute and regulate characters' dialogue by defining those conditions that must be followed for characters to perform certain speech acts (requesting, inviting, ordering, promising). Thus, for example, when a writer tells the examiner (in his discussion leading up to the reading of his story) that his text deals with characters eating 'barfo bits', we can assume that the characters in this story are conventional in the sense that they know how to talk about food as pre-teens. Additionally, the same writer's comparisons of a main character in the story's behaviour to the behaviours of the others in the story shows us, his readers, his awareness of social conventions and how these conventional attributes lend an aura of "reality" to his tale.

Speech Act Conventions

Searle (1969) presents the view that a speech act involves three basic acts: the utterance act, the illocutionary act, and its intended perlocutionary effect. The utterance act (called the locutionary act by Austin, 1962) is simply the act of uttering words conforming to grammatical rules. However, in addition to making an utterance, a speaker also performs an illocutionary act. These are acts performed in making or in producing an utterance. To say, for example, "Please close the door" is to produce a locution which ostensibly makes sense and refers. In addition to doing this, though, the speaker performs the illocutionary act of requesting someone to get up and close the door. Once this has been accomplished, the speaker has achieved his intended purpose and the act has produced its intended perlocutionary effect.

Underlying the production of speech acts are a host of conditions which must be fulfilled in order for the speech act to be accomplished. Austin (1962) referred to these as felicity conditions while Labov and Fanshel (1977), amongst others, refer to conditions that emphasize the speaker and audience's beliefs about each other's intentions, needs, obligations, rights or sincerity. In keeping with the need to take into account such conditions, Beach claims that readers use their knowledge of speech act conditions to make inferences about characters' traits, beliefs and goals. There mere fact that a character performs certain acts implies certain character traits or status. For example, when a writer reports that one of his characters likes skateboards and

that when eating 'barfo bits', he says, ". . . just like the food at home" implies that this character has a certain personality imputed to him by the writer and that the personality traits are consistent with those held by others of the same disposition in the real world. What is also pertinent here is the writer's attempts to construct a "world of possibility" in which his characters act in a fashion that is consistent with actions that take place in the world as we know it. For example, liking skateboards is consistent with likes of children in the "actual world". In the same regard, disliking 'barfo bits' (spaghetti and meatballs) by saying, "Oooh, these are disgusting" is expressing an attitude that mirrors the attitudes of children who live in the world as we know it.

Social Conventions

Readers, as Beach claims, draw upon their knowledge of social conventions, conventions that define appropriate versus inappropriate behaviour within certain social, cultural, or historical contexts (p. 110). In addition, within Beach's point of view, social conventions often concern behaviour that is appropriate to social class distinctions. Thus, within the social or hierarchical structure, a reader infers that certain speech acts are appropriate to certain roles.

To offer a further illustration, when one of the writers in the study refers to an "air walk company who makes clothes", his readers will readily recognize the phrase because they too have been exposed to ads on television that talk about shoes you "pump

up" in order to wear them for walking or for playing games. What is relevant here is that in all of the writer's speech acts of "reporting", one can see how attuned he is to his readership who, of course, are his fellow students. Take, for example, the reference to Forzani's (a sporting goods store in Calgary, Canada) and the subsequent reference to a house where the doorknocker is a bronzed thumb (as opposed to the bronzed shoes which adorn many mantlepieces in houses in Western Canada). In the first case, his readership will be able to identify with Forzani's; in the second case, they will have to read critically to make the connection between bronzed thumbs and bronzed baby shoes. Some will make the connection and some will not; others will merely note the information. In all cases, the use of social conventions is a reflection of the writer's cultural milieu and mirrors the sociocultural context in which he lives and has his being.

Literary Conventions

It is evident that readers draw on their knowledge of literary conventions to make inferences about dialogue. Beach (1985) is not alone when he claims that reading a text means that a reader perceives the dialogue as more than simply a transcript of people conversing (p. 111). In addition, a reader of one's own text knows that an author uses dialogue in a deliberate manner and for symbolic purposes, purposes which are essentially employed to imply meaning.

In one writer's text, the use of dialogue that is stylized and

archaic is a central feature of the story; its use is to convey a certain meaning to the reader. His intention is to convey to the reader that this is a special time and a special place. The choice of language is deliberately designed to suggest a time period that is both ancient and mysterious and, in one sense, timeless. For example, in one segment we have the following:

> "I be Nigeluis the acrobat and this is my partner Devemus" to which Ousane replied, "I be the son of Gonshrunk the blacksmith."

Here, the writer's use of a style of language reminiscent of Tolkien's The Hobbit does suggest a period of time that is rooted in the past. However, the events which accompany the dialogue are very definitely concerned with events which are to happen in the future. Skateboards, for example, are very much rooted in the contemporary scene whereas solar laser tag games seem to be of the future.

To sum up, writers employ discourse conventions in constructing a possible text world. Readers who are familiar with these conventions will be able to gain access to these worlds because of their familiarity with speech act, social and literary conventions.

What is germane to this analysis is that given that discourse conventions represent one way of talking about response to literature, one would then be able to discuss these conventions within the framework of discourse possible worlds. What is assumed here is that a text can be viewed as

"constructed world" and that readers can, to varying degrees, enter the possible world of the text and talk about the experience through the use of discourse conventions. Essentially, this is the nub of this whole enterprise: talk of possible worlds is best expressed through the use of speech act, social and literary conventions. There are, however, some aspects of this endeavour which need to be articulated in order to understand the relationship of discourse conventions. These aspects will be discussed under the rubric of possible worlds.

Discourse Conventions and Possible Worlds

One of the basic assumptions guiding this discussion is that a text is a "constructed world"; it exists in the mind of the writer and its emergence on paper is the product of the writer's ability to create that world. As such, it represents, for the reader, a believable account. The reader, who enters the text, must subject the text to certain standards of conduct and, as I stated earlier, the criterion of believability is basic. In cases where the text is fanciful, I feel that the reader does not abandon the criterion of believability; rather the reader adopts a tentative stance wherein he is able to see "both sides of the question". His language is reflective of the stance he has adopted; the reader adopts the language of modal constructions so that he can "feel his way along". In this way, he is able to become critical in his evaluation or judgment of that text.

Formal Logical Views on Possible Worlds

The Doctrine of Possible Worlds

The notion of possible worlds has (as I have stated earlier) its origins in Leibniz who saw the universe - the actual world - as one of an infinite number of possible worlds; worlds which existed in the mind of God. Lewis (1986) adopts a literalist perspective when he states:

> I believe there are possible worlds other than the one we happen to inhabit. If an argument is wanted, it is this: It is uncontroversially true that things might have been otherwise than they are. I believe, and so do you, that things could have been different in countless ways...I therefore believe in the existence of entities which might be called 'ways things could have been.' I prefer to call the 'possible worlds'" (1973, p. 84).

The essential feature of Lewis' argument is based on the presumption that the sentences of ordinary language be taken at face value (Stalnaker, 1984). In this respect, Lewis offers the suggestion that possible worlds really reflect some ordinary beliefs rather than a metaphysical theory. Nevertheless, there is a problem here; one that cannot be readily solved by explaining away the terminological differences which exist between a metaphysical and an ordinary language explanation. Stalnaker offers a solution to this puzzle concerning "possible worlds" by examining Lewis' theses about possible worlds. To do this, he describes the four theses which he feels constitute a doctrine which he labels 'extreme realism about possible worlds' (p. 44). The four theses are described in Table 2.

Table 2

Lewis' Doctrine of Extreme Realism About Possible Worlds

1. Possible Worlds Exist. Other possible worlds are just as real as the actual world. They may not actually exist, since to actually exist is to exist in the actual world, but they do, nevertheless, exist.

2. Other possible worlds are things of the same sort as the actual world - "I and all my surroundings." They differ "not in kind, but only in what goes on at them. Our actual world is only one world among others. We call it alone actual not because it differs in kind from all the rest, but because it is the world we inhabit" (Lewis, 1973, p. 85).

3. The indexical analysis of the adjective 'actual' is the correct analysis. "The inhabitants of other worlds may truly call their own world actual if they mean by 'actual' what we do; for the meaning we give to 'actual' is such that it refers at any world 'i' to that world 'i' itself. 'Actual' is indexical, like "I' or 'here' or 'now': it depends for its reference on the circumstances of utterance, to wit, the world where the utterance is located." (Lewis, 1973, pp. 85-86)

4. Possible worlds cannot be reduced to something more basic. "Possible worlds are what they are and not another thing." It would be a mistake to identify them with some allegedly more respectable entity, for example, a set of sentences of some language. Possible worlds are "respectable entities in their own right." (Lewis, 1973, p. 85).

(From Stalnaker, 1984, p. 45)

On the basis of the theses presented by Stalnaker (1984), it would appear that Lewis views possible worlds as perfectly respectable entities as they stand. In other words, he appears committed to the "genuine existence of a countless infinity of parallel universes among which ours is picked out as special only in being one that is actual-for-us" (Devitt & Sterelny 1987, p. 24). Stalnaker (1984) questions what he calls the extreme realism of Lewis' views on possible worlds. Basically, he feels (believes) the doctrine is false; however, he feels it is still possible to defend a more moderate form of realism about possible worlds. In so doing he adopts what he calls a "minimal world-story theory": that something is only possible as part of a possible completely determinate situation. Hence, for Stalnaker, "the concept of a possible world is a basic concept in an account of the way we represent the world in our propositional acts and attitudes" (p. 57). What he seems to be defending here is a formal or functional rather than metaphysical notion. Possible worlds are analyzable in terms of their prepositional content. In his words, "To believe in possible worlds is to believe only that those activities have a certain structure, the structure which possible worlds theory helps to bring out" (ibid, p. 57).

However, despite Stalnaker's criticism of Lewis' theory of possible worlds, I find that there is too much of semantic explanation in Stalnaker to be of use in examining how readers construct possible worlds based on their encounters with text.

Rather, I feel more inclined to favour Lewis' (1986) claims primarily because I feel they are more straightforward and, hence, more acceptable as a commonsense notion of what we mean by possible worlds. Hence, I accept the thesis that these are other worlds and individuals inhabiting these worlds. And, in Lewis' words, these are of a certain nature and suited to play certain theoretical roles (p. viii). The challenge, then, is to show how readers negotiate their entrance into these possible worlds, how they describe their "visits" to such "worlds" and their assessments of their encounters with the text worlds they have visited. This, of course, places a purely metaphysical tone on talk about possible worlds but it is what I intended. What is needed, though, is a further elaboration and to do so, I turn next to Piper (1987), Bruner (1986), and Coutes (1990), amongst others, in my review of conceptual notions which might enrich our understanding of the concept of possible worlds.

Piper (1987) views the notion of possible worlds under the rubric of macro-schemata. In his words,

> One of the most intriguing areas of schema-theoretic research lies in attempts to define and demonstrate the influence on reading of superordinate schemata at the macro-level of 'narrative possible world'. This is a particularly interesting area of research for two main reasons: first it naturally involves the work not only of reading psychologists but

> also of logicians, text-linguists, and literary critics, and second, - in keeping with principles of context-dependency - it seems that successful isolation and description of lower-level psychological organization may well depend upon successful description of such macro-level phenomena (p. 84).

In Piper's view, then, narrative worlds are to be construed as examples of macro-structures which lend order to "the reasoning and imaginations of readers as they reconstruct and interpret the details of narrative texts" (1987, p. 85).

In supporting his thesis, Piper reviews the theoretical and philosophical ground for his claims. From the field of formal logic, arguments in favour of this position are taken from Bradley and Swartz (1979), Haack (1978), Chellas (1980), and Lewis (1973), amongst others. The influence of modal logic is central to an understanding of possible worlds and Piper offers a number of insightful comments showing how the logical perspective has important implications for identifying possible world frameworks.

However, the primary force of Piper's use of the term really has more to do with what he calls the "psychology of text processing" and the influence of semiotics as a "powerful new model for examining possible world reasoning" (p. 89). It is within this purview that the notion of possible worlds receives its strongest treatment. Piper is in agreement with Haack's

(1978) three modes of psychologism (weak, strong, and anti-) where she (Haack) claims that the most reasonable interpretation of the relationship between logic and thought is given in her weak version wherein "logic...is prescriptive of reasoning in the limited sense that inference in accordance with logical principles is safe" (quoted in Piper, 1987, p. 91). In this respect, it would appear that Piper's position is contra Lewis (1973) and pro Eco (1984). He is also somewhat against Bruner's (1986) view that all 'worlds' have equal status; that there exist possible worlds which have privileged status over other worlds. Rather, in Piper's view, it would be possible to conduct research studies which would examine subjects' metacognitive judgments about narrative possible worlds by measuring "distances" that subjects were from text worlds. I find this possibility more interesting and fruitful than Bruner's (1986) attempts wherein reader's were asked to retell stories which were then analyzed utilizing Todorov's (1977) transformations as an analytic tool. Part of my reluctance in accepting Bruner's views on possible worlds probably has more to do with my unease with his presentation of narrative possible worlds: Bruner's thesis that there is a rapproachment to be achieved between narrative and paradigmatic modes of thought is an unconvincing one. In effect, Bruner needs to explicate this dichotomy in a more perspicuous manner, and to show how the two can be united or at least how the two modes of thought are related.

The discussion that Piper offers, showing the relationship between possible worlds and literary semantics, is convincing. Both Benton (1983) and Pavel (1976), and Rader (1982) represent semantic views describing possible worlds from the perspective of a schema-theoretic view of the reading process. Iser (1978) and Rosenblatt (1978), on the other hand, are quite outside the realm of possible world semantics and it would require some further elaboration to show how they relate to possible worlds. This is a task which Bruner (1986) attempts and, as I have stated earlier, it is one which has met with mixed reviews (Sperber, 1987).

Bruner's position represents, nevertheless, an important contribution to our understanding of how readers "construct" a possible world in their encounters with text and because Bruner attempts to integrate Iser with Goodman, amongst others, it is essential that his views be examined. The central thrust of Bruner's views on possible minds is to be found in his Actual Minds, Possible Worlds, published in 1986 by Cambridge University Press.

The book contains three sections. In Part one, "Two Natural Kinds", Bruner examines the "psychological foundations of the literary imagination and understanding." This particular viewpoint is captured in a way that would be familiar to teachers familiar with a schema-theoretic view of reading. For example, "top-down partisans" take their view of literature from a theory about story, about mind, about writers, about readers

(Bruner, 1986, pp. 9-10). Fortified with a suitable hypothesis, the top-down partisan "searches for instances...of a right 'explanation'." In other words, this view focuses on a correct interpretation - there is obviously an objective meaning of the text which one can discover through a careful analysis.

"Bottom-up partisans", on the other hand, focus on a particular piece of text: a novel, a story, a poem, even a line. They "take it as their morsel of reality and explore it to reconstruct it or deconstruct it" (Ibid, p. 10). There is no attempt here to prove or disprove a theory, but to explore the world of a literary work. Hence, readers are not so much enjoined to search for a correct interpretation as they are to engage themselves with the text. Exploration can also be viewed as the reader's "lived through" experience with the text. For example, teachers who might want to have their students read Paterson's The Great Gilley Hopkins might encourage their students to reflect on what kind of a person Gilley is and whether they, as students, identify with her in any way. Here, students are being encouraged to enter Gilley's "world" and see both the character and themselves in that world. In this respect, the teacher is not looking for a correct interpretation of the text, or of Gilley. Hence, as the teacher reads the book to the children (or with them as part of a community of readers), the students should begin to gain a revised (and unfolding) picture of Gilley.

Bruner's treatment of Iser is refreshing, particularly his

commentary on Iser's creation of virtual text. Here, Bruner is at his best when he is able to weave Jakobson, Barthes, Freud and others into a coherent description of the "psychology of genre":

> Genre seems to be a way of both organizing the structure of events and organizing the telling of them - a way that can be used for one's own storytelling or, indeed for "placing" stories or is reading or hearing. Something in the actual text "triggers" an interpretation of genre in the reader, an interpretation that then dominates the reader's own creation of what Wolfgang Iser calls a "virtual text" (p. 6).

This "virtual text" is not the heart of the reading act for readers at all ages and levels of expression because it suggests that while the actual text remains unchanged, the virtual text "changes almost moment by moment in the act of reading" and teachers should be aware of the unfolding dynamic character of the act of reading for their students. Hence, Bridge to Terebithia will affect its readers in a variety of ways. Teachers will find that these are a number of interpretations which will be offered by students with part of the responsibility of each interpretive community of readers being the sharing of those interpretations through discussion, rereading, and writing.

In Part Two, "Language and Reality," Bruner lays out the theoretical framework upon which the other two sections are based. Prominent in this section is his notion of a cultural tool kit: "human mental activity depends for its full expression upon being linked to a cultural tool kit - a set of

prosthetic devices, so to speak" (Bruner, 1986, p. 15). These tools (read prosthetic devices and I think here that Bruner is talking about language as a tool for communicating) are, it is evident, socially transmitted. In this respect, then, a comprehensive study of cognition cannot be divorced from a study of social interaction. Thus, in his attempts to meld psychological and socio-cultural perspectives, Bruner draws on the work of Vygotsky (1978) to develop a "socio-cultural" approach to psychological processes. It was Vygotsky who argued that higher mental functions appear first on a social plane, between people, and only then as a result of social interaction, on a psychological plane, inside the minds of individuals. In this regard, Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" represents a term he coined to characterize the gap between the problem-solving abilities exhibited by the child on his own at a certain stage of his development and the abilities he might exhibit under adult guidance with a view to eventually internalizing these abilities. The third part, "acting in Constructed Worlds," examines theories of education and development. In his "Language of Education" (Chapter 9), Bruner defends a view of culture as "a forum for negotiating and renegotiating meaning". Within this view, storytelling, theatre, science, even jurisprudence are all techniques that provide a forum for "exploring possible worlds out of the context of immediate need" (p. 123).

Thus, narrative for Bruner is a rendering of the world of

story into the consciousness of its protagonists. The storyteller does not get the reality of the story "straight"; rather, he/she gets it through the character in the story. As Bruner would say, the text "recruits the reader's imagination" to construct a possible meaning (or meanings) of a particular text. For teachers, this would suggest that "getting inside a text" can sometimes be more effectively encouraged by having her students "get inside" a character. We can come to a fuller understanding of Gilley by attempting to get inside her life and we do this by continuing to explore her life through the pictures painted of her by Paterson and by talking about her with our peers.

Bruner's views on possible worlds represents an attempt to show how readers "write" their own virtual texts through employing features of discourse that "recruit the reader's imagination": presupposition, subjectification, and multiple perspective. The latter deals with the reader's ability to view the world of the text through a set of prisms each of which captures some aspect of the world. Presupposition, on the otherhand, has to do with the creation of implicit rather than explicit meaning while subjectification is concerned with the reader's view of reality through "the filter of consciousness of protagonists in the story" (Bruner, 1986, pp. 25-26). In all of this, what is clear is Bruner's constructivist view of the process of world-making, a view which contrasts sharply with deconstructionist views of the act of reading (Derrida, 1982).

Finally, given that Bruner (1986) and Piper (1987) reflect a "possible worlds" emphasis, it seems only fitting that this view of how reading takes place be examined further to discover what related perspectives are being utilized by researchers to explain how individuals construct worlds of discourse, through talk and through writing. What I am thinking of here is the work of Jennifer Coates (1987, 1988, 1990).

Coates' original work (see Coates, 1983) focused on the modal auxiliaries: must, should ought, will, shall, may, might, can, could, would. Following this initial research interests, Coates' interest shifted from her attempts to look at modal auxiliaries in a particular (and narrow) sense to an interest in examining modality generally. One of the basic reasons she offered for this shift in focus had to do with a growing awareness that modal auxiliaries are part of a much wider system. Secondly, she wanted to examine ways in which speakers use modality to facilitate interaction (Coates, 1987, p. 111). Such an area of investigation is important for a number of reasons: studying spoken texts is, as she states, prototypical - it is the form in which we are all first exposed to language (ibid, p. 111). In addition, for Coates, conversation represented an enriching context within which one could explore "the complex and subtle patterns of modality produced by speakers".

In a subsequent paper, Coates (1988) explored the manner in which children aged eight and twelve acquired meanings of

modality. In her research she used a card-sorting method devised by Miller (1971) to investigate similarities and dissimilarities. Her tests revealed that eight-year-olds have only a rudimentary system of modal meaning, and that even by the age of twelve a child's system is not equivalent to that of the adult system.

Coates (1990) claims that "The spontaneous talk produced by real people in natural situations is an enormous challenge to any theory of meaning" (p. 53). In this regard, formal semantics is not helpful, given its emphasis on sentence meaning. Rather, what one needs to do in order to examine the role of discourse in the creation of possible worlds is to examine modal logic from a pragmatic perspective. In her view, semantics is concerned with sentence-meaning whereas pragmatics is concerned with utterance-meaning (cf. Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983). Thus, "It's cold in here" could be judged in terms of its semantic content (i.e., with its literal or referential meaning) whereas analyzing it from a pragmatic point of view enables us to understand why this sentence uttered in a particular context produces an action on the part of the recipient of that utterance.

Talk by its very nature is dyadic. Meanings are negotiated by both speaker and hearer. As Coates puts it, "Talk is dialogue, not a sequence of monologues." However, traditional accounts of modality deal exclusively with sentence-based models of meaning with the truth value of isolated propositions. When

applied to utterances, they have serious limitations. In the first instance, the terms and categories used (e.g., aletheutic, epistemic, deontic) are opaque and difficult to understand. Secondly, modal logic emphasizes objective modality at the expense of subjective modality.

Modality has to do with notions such as possibility, necessity, ability, volition, obligation. It is possible, however, to explain modality in terms of our ability to conceptualize parallel worlds: insofar as humans can imagine things being otherwise, they express this awareness using forms whose essence is that they qualify the categorical (Coates, 1990, p. 54). In this respect, many languages rely on the mood of the verb to express modal meaning, that is, on contrasts between indicative, subjunctive, imperative, etc. In English, the chief exponents of modality are the modal auxiliaries: can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, must, ought, need, and other lexical items to do with possibility, necessity, volition, etc., such as perhaps, possibility, allow, able, willing.

Within Coates' framework, then, two terms in traditional modal logic are relevant to the description of natural spoken discourse - epistemic and deontic. Epistemic meaning is expressed by those linguistic forms which indicate the speaker's confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition expressed in the utterance. Hence, lexical items such as perhaps, may, must, possible, I think, as well as certain

prosodic and paralinguistic features are used in English to express epistemic modality. Deontic modality, on the other hand, is expressed by those forms which indicate obligation an permission. Coates use the example, "You must fill in this form" to show that in this utterance the auxiliary 'must' indicates to the addressee that filling in the form is obligatory. In English, therefore, forms like must, should, may, can, permission, obliged express deontic modality. As Coates states,

> "Such a distinction is useful because it allows us to talk sensibly about the ambiguity of expressions as in, for example, 'It may rain tomorrow' where 'may' here expresses the speaker's lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition (epistemic modality)." (p. 55)

How Do Texts Instruct Their Readers On How To Read And Write Them? An Attempt At A Synthesis

The literature which I have reviewed can not be considered comprehensive in its treatment of reader response. However, this review was not intended to be exhaustive, rather, what I had hoped to do was to highlight some of the major tenets of some of the major theories (and theorists) with a view to constructing a simple model of the response. Such a model might then serve as a basis for further discussion and elaboration or refinement of the model. However, having experimented by putting together 'a model' which might capture the essence of all the view presented, I came to the conclusion that it might be more productive to first of all, show how the various

theoretical positive might be represented as models and then to attempt a kind of synthesis of models.

Rosenblatt's Transactional Model

In her discussion of reading/writing relationships, Rosenblatt (1989) makes the point that reading and writing, despite their similarities, have obvious differences in that the writer starts with a blank page and must produce a text, while the reader starts with the already written text and must produce meaning (p. 154). However, it is Rosenblatts' use of 'the transactional paradigm' which has "performed implications for understanding language activities in general and reading and writing imparticular" (p. 155).

An essential part of this transactional paradigm is the reader's adoption of a stance. It is the reader's stance which reflects his/her purpose in reading a text. The reading event thus falls somewhere in a continuum, either "predominantly aesthetic" or " predominantly efferent". Efferent reading focuses on information, what needs to be retained after the reading event. Aesthetic reading, on the other hand, is that kind of reading where the reader "adopts an attitude of readiness to focus attention on what is being lived through during the reading event" (p. 159). As Rosenblatt (1989) puts it,

> The aesthetic reader experiences and savours the qualities of the structural ideas, situations, scenes, personalities, and emotions that are called forth and participates in the

> tensions, conflicts, and resolutions as they unfold, (ibid, p. 159).

Hence, this "lived-through" meaning corresponds to the text and the meaning shaped during the aesthetic transaction constitutes, in Rosenblatt's own words, "the literary work", the poem, story, or play. She goes on to state that it is this evocation, and not the text, that is the object of the reader's "response" and "interpretation" both during and after the reading event (ibid, p. 159). The model she presents, help to demonstrate how these events can be visualized (see Figure 1). The model that Rosemblatt presents highlights the notion of public and prints aspects of sense of particular importance here in the claim that some text can be read efferently or aesthetically. What the good reader does, though, is approach the text alert to the cues offered and automatically adopting the appropriate dominant stance. Rosemblatt states that one of the important cues offered the reader is the physical layout of the text, particularly poetic text. Essentially, in her view, many readings fall near the center of the continuum where, as she says, "both parts of the 'iceberg' of measuring are more evenly involved" (p. 160). Hence, while the proficient reader may cue on the physical features of text, he/she will probably attend to these cues in concert with a balanced stance reflecting both efferent and aesthetic perspectives.

Iser's Implied Reader

Constructing a 'model' of Iser's views on reading presents more of a challenge primarily because his view of the act of reading lies, as it were, outside the boundaries of a traditional and schema-theoretic views of the reading process. Hence, attempts to develop a model describing Iser's "Act of Reading" will have to be less constrained and more open-ended. For Iser (1978) the text represents potential. The text is a kind of blueprint or set of instructions that require activating by the reader. Reading is thereby a process wherein the reader is required to assemble meaning for Dias's and Hayhoe's (1988) words, "The reader is enabled and expected to inhabit the text as its co-author and to be aware of and hence evaluate the experience" (p. 20).

For Iser, the text incorporates two major interacting components:

> ...a latent repertoire of social and cultural norms, elements and traditions of past literature ....the other a compendium of procedures or strategies to help the reader in reading the text (quoted in Dias and Hayhoe, 1988, P. 20).

Reading, in the Iserian sense, then, is not entirely subjective given that the formal properties of texts must be attended to by the reader. Conversely, the reader is not totally dominated by the text because the reader must fill in the blanks; gaps; and 'indeterminancies' in the text. In fine, reading in the Iserian sense is a dynamic process.

The relationship of text and reader is described by Iser

(1978) in the following manner,

> the literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic and aesthetic: the artistic pole is the author's text and the aesthetic is the realization accomplished by the reader (p. 21).

Written this framework, the literary text provides the reader with a set of schematized (and incomplete) instructions (Davis, 1989). The "blanks" in the text require completion by the reader and this completion is based upon the reader's personal experiences constrained, of course, by the instruction provided by the text. The world of the text is apprehended through the imagination. The actual words of the text are a "given" just as real world phenomena represent a "given".

Iser (1978) employs the journey metaphor in his description of reading as an aesthetic experience. As the reader "travels" through the novel, his/her viewpoint moves or shifts. Each phase of the reader's journey is called a "perspective" by Iser (1978) who conceptualizes four possible narrative perspectives: 1) the narrator; 2) the plot; 3) the characters; and 4) the fictitious reader. The text is thus experienced by way of the reader's wandering viewpoint through the various perspectives of the narrative (Davis, 1989, p.421). Iser (1978) sees each previous perspective creating a "horizon" of expectations. It is this unfulfilled anticipation or expectation which encourages the reader to persist in his/her journey through the text. For Iser, this "traveller" through the text is viewed by him as an "implied reader". In other words, complete understanding of a

text is impossible. Rather, the "implied reader" is an active partner in the production of a literary work.

The key aspect of an Iserian representation is, in my view, the notion of interpretation. I have used the term meaning as part of interprets to suggest a number of possibilities. The first of these is the notion of 'making sense'; readers attempt to make sense of text's they read. I don't believe for example that they adopt a stance of "willing disbelief"; rather what seems evident is that readers engage in a contractual arrangement in which they agree to read the text through before seeking a final critical judgment. A second aspect which I have attempted to portray is the reader's involvement in the text. I assume that part of the reader's involvement has to do with attending to the author's actual text. In addition, though, is the notion of the reader's involvement which is achieved by the reader's willingness to attend to the set of instructions - the blueprint - provided by the author. However, the crucial element here is that while the author is constrained by the set of schematized instructions, he/she (as reader) transforms the text through "the interpretation of words that produces the literary world" (Davis, 1989, p. 421).

Beach's Discourse Conventions

The key to Beach's (1984) model of response is contained in a brief comment made at the onset of his article where he states, "unpacking the implied meanings of dialogue is an

essential element in response to literature" (p. 103). To gain insights into how authors create dialogue utilizing certain conventions which readers use to make inferences. Beach proposes a model of the inference process based on three different types of discourse conventions: speech act, social and literary conventions.

Beach, in summarizing his own positions, makes the following observations,

1. In responding to dialogue, readers go beyond inferring only characters' utterances to inferring characters' intentions, goals, beliefs, needs, traits, and so on, that are implied by utterances. Understanding a text has much to do with inferring these implied meanings.
2. Readers employ certain schema in the form of tacit knowledge of discourse conventions to make these inferences. Because readers already know the conventions which constitute successful performance of certain acts, or the conventions which determine appropriate or typical behaviour in a certain context, they can infer various meanings implied by dialogue.
3. Differences in students; tacit knowledge of these discourse conventions, due to the extent or nature of their background experiences, result in differences in their inferences about dialogue (P. 111-112).

In his treatment of speech act conventions, Beach draws

heavily on the work of H.P. Grice (1957 - 1974), particularly Grice's theory of meaning as a derived form of intentionality. Within his construct, Grice's conversational postulates are introduced to help explain how speaker's should use speech acts to convey their intentions to their listeners. Hence, speakers should be brief, to the point, tell the truth, be sincere, be relevant, be perspicuous, and be informative. Essentially, this is a theory about how people use language and the foregoing points I have briefly stated are described in more detail under the heading: maxims of conversations (see Levinson, 1983, for an elaborated discussion of Grice's theory of implicature). For Beach, it is the speaker's and the reader's deliberate flaunting of these maxims which "implies meanings beyond the meanings of explicit statements" (p. 109).

Based on his model, Beach has derived a set of categories that can be used to analyze readers' inferences. He has used these categories as a guide for developing a descriptive, anecdotal discussion of responses. Beach (1984) provides a sample category system (see P. 113 ff). The value provided by Beach's model is that he has attempted to demonstrate how his model can be applied, not only to individual reader responses, but to group responses, particularly on a comparative basis. Horobin (1989) utilized Beach's category system in her analysis of how young writers and readers make sense of text they have both read and have produced as part of their apprenticeship as budding writers. Suffice it to say that much of Beach's work on

literary dialogue is tied to the reader's grasp of dialogue in written text.

Possible Worlds

One way to think of possible worlds is to think of them as "the sort of thing we can imagine or conceive "(Martin, 1987, P. 4). The world we inhabit represents just such a case and it is called by philosophers and logicians, the actual world. It is also possible to imagine a world that might have been different from the way things are in the actual world. Ghandi might have lived to a ripe old age and Carter might have succeeded in his rescue attempts to free the American hostages is in Iran. In talking about such situations speakers use the subjunctive mood; model expressions such as 'might' or 'may' are employed. In a rough sense, then, "a possible world is any situation that is conceivable or imaginable" (Martin, 1987, p. 4). Works of fiction represent, as it were, represent possible world 'situations' and, following Martin again, a possible world can be defined as"any situation that can be described in a consistent story". This, of course, represents a rough definition of possible worlds and I shall refrain from introducing more formal terminology into the discussion. At some point in time, though, I shall want to introduce, along with other notions, Kripke's (1972) concept of the rigid designation, particularly since I feel it is; an important concept for a fuller understanding of how readers enter possible

worlds of fiction (or discourse possible worlds, as Piper, 1987 calls them). Piper (1987) reports that there are a number of researchers who have been working on the place of possible worlds in the psychology of textual processing (CF. Van Dijk, 1977; de Beaugrande, 1980; Benton; 1983; Pavel, 1976). Benton (1983) develops a model of secondary worlds which is made up of three processing planes - a psychic level - a level which accounts for the constant interplay between cognitive and metacognitive processes in reading; psychic distance - which reflects the reader's degrees of involvement with texts and expresses their sense of relationship with the text; and psychic process - which describes the temporal plane upon which the other two dimensions occur (as reported in Piper, 1987, P. 88).

Although Piper refers to other theoretical views of possible worlds and psychological textual processing, his real preference is for a semiotic interpretation, a view of possible worlds which will, in his worlds "offers a welcome synthesis of ideas and a powerful new model for examining possible world reasoning" (p. 89). Using Eco (1979, 1984, 1986) as his starting point, Piper talks about the reader's construction of world structures. For Eco (and for Piper) narrative reading requires constant forecasting and predicting through what are called inferential walks which require the provision of possible worlds and textual frames by the reader. Possible worlds are thus the frames for inferential walks in which the reader imagines possible (but not actual) outcomes of the story (P. 90). Generally, Piper

attempts to tie the possible worlds view of Eco to an information processing paradigm. In fact, he refers to possible worlds as macro-schemata. While Piper (1987) provides a rational and coherent argument for his view of possible worlds, it would appear that his argument rests upon a correspondence view of how text processing takes place. Such a view is consistent with ideas expressed by others (see Stalnaker, 1984). My own preference is for an act and achievement centered-view of possible worlds. Possible worlds exist and like individuals who act in the real world, readers of fictional texts act upon and within these texts in much the same way. Hence, the way into the text is through the reader's involvement in the actual world of events.

In addition, there is the place of modal auxiliaries in the reader's talk about possible worlds. Without attempting to retrace Coate's (1990) views on modal auxiliaries, let me simply restate some of her basic assumptions. First of all, she claims that speakers use modality to facilitate interaction. Secondly, she sees the need for researchers to examine the role of modal logic from a pragmatic perspective primarily because formal semantics it too limiting a perspective from which to examine a speaker's utterance-meaning (Levinson, 1983). In addition, given that talk is dyadic implies that the meanings produced are the consequence of negotiation. Hence, meanings are not situated solely in the texts of the speakers; rather, they are negotiated in the give-and-take of conversation. In like

work is related to reader-response criticism: Bleich (1978), Holland (1975), Fish (1980), Culler (1975), and others too numerous to mention here. In sum, it is a preliminary attempt to describe a possible worlds interpretation of literary text using both a possible worlds framework and a phenomenological perspective.

What I propose to do next is to discuss how such a perspective might be applied in an actual experiment with young readers. What follows, then, is a somewhat formal examination of the responses of four readers to two texts along with an examination of their views on reading.

Methods

Participants

Sixty-three students in grades four, five and six in a Canadian elementary school served as the subject pool for this observational study. Prior to the selection of these subjects, a pilot study was undertaken with 32 students from a grade five class in another school but in the same city. The pilot study was undertaken to refine the questionnaire developed to gain insights into students perceptions of their own reading. In addition, the pilot study was used to refine techniques for gaining responses from students to text.

From the sixty-three subjects, fifteen subjects were initially chosen by Horobin (1989) who conducted an ethnographic study examining the writing to learn processes of seven of these fifteen who were selected by Horobin in conjunction with the staff of three teachers in the school. This examiner was involved with these subjects over the course of Horobin's data gathering phase (during the months of February through July, 1988). It was during this phase of Horobin's research that I became involved, first as an "outsider" and later as an "informed observer". Given my visits to the school during the time that Horobin was in the school, I was able to assist her in the process of indefinite triangulation of her data and in talking to the group of seven students she worked with intensively during the last two months of her stay at the

school. It was during this time that I met "Bradley" and spent time talking to him on a regular basis over this time period and then at regular intervals from 1988 to the fall of 1990. He became the key informant in the study (along with Danusia); they, along with Jean-Paul and Nate formed the basis for the final set of interviews and for the analysis of their data which followed.

The choice of these four subjects was made in conversations with the two teachers who taught them and who were also involved in the initial study of Horobin's. Basically, these four were chosen in light of their involvement in the earlier study and because, in the minds of their teachers, they were children considered to be prolific readers and writers. Consent for their involvement in the study was obtained through written forms which the parents signed. The study was also approved by the University of Calgary's ethical review board.

Each of the four subjects was interviewed for one hour in a small conference room in the school. Interviews were tape recorded for the later transcription. Each subject was asked to read (silently) a chapter from a book written by Katherine Paterson entitled The Great Gilly Hopkins. The chapter in question comes from the second half of the book and has to do with Gilly's attempts to nurse three individuals through a serious bout of the flu. These three are, respectively, Maime Trotter, Gilly's care/giver, W.E. (the other child in Maime's care), and Mr Randolph, a blind black neighbour who goes to the

same Baptist Church as Maime and who is moved into the Trotter household so that he can receive the same care and attention as the other two sick individuals. Gilly is, of course, the only "well" person in the household and it is she who must nurse the other three individuals back to health. The visit of Gilly's grandmother provides the moment of high drama to the chapter.

Once the reading was completed, each of the four students was asked to provide a written response to the chapter.

Following the reading of the chapter, each student was presented with a piece of expository text entitled "Ten Terrific Tips for Buying a Ten Speed". Prior to the reading, some brainstorming was undertaken to activate each reader's prior knowledge about ten-speed bikes. The piece was then read silently and further probing of each student's understanding of the article was undertaken. This activity was designed to place emphasis upon a different reading of the text.

After this activity was completed, each student was asked to read and respond to a piece of their own reading. Finally, each student was interviewed to gain insights into their views on reading.

Analysis of Results

Descriptions of Each Participant

1. Bradley: He is one of the two key informants in the study. Bradley is a small boy with dark-brown hair who wears dark-rimmed glasses. At the time the interviews he was in the sixth grade (Age: 10 years - eight months). He has big brown eyes and a bright smile. At the time we worked with Bradley, his parents divorced. Nevertheless, Bradley was able to maintain contact with his father while living with his mother and older sister. He has a slight speech impediment characterized by a slight lisp involving 'r' and 'l' controller sounds.

Since the fall of 1988, Bradley has been actively involved in writing his first novel entitled ASHET (Az:het'). The writing of this novel continued for most of the 1988-89 school term and was some 75 pages in length (Bradley kept adding chapters as new plots developed out of his reading of the novel during a class activity called Author's Chair). The novel, when I examined it in the spring of 1989, was largely a draft with essentially no revisions evident (except for the Prologue which had been revised on a word processor at school). The text had been divided into chapters (but with no chapter heads) and appeared to be a science fictional account of the adventures of a character from a distant planet whose spacecraft had gotten lodged on the roof of Bradley's house. The text is

characterized by its elaborate use of dialogue in which Bradley and Ashet interact on a close, personal level. There is a sense in which Ashet (and his later characters) represent Bradley's alter-ego; character-types who perform superhuman acts in which Bradley participates vicariously.

The most interesting feature of the novel is the inclusion of a prologue, a literacy device borrowed from Tolkien (Bradley had read all of Tolkien's writings). But, in fact, Bradley borrows other features of Tolkien's writing and these features appear throughout the novel and again in his more recent works. For example, the use of stylized dialogue, as in the use of old English forms for example, "Methinks, My Name Be Dragorn, Thou Hast, etc"). In addition, Bradley's writings offer a further mixture of Science Fiction in the form of Ashet's magical powers (i.e., his space ship, his method of time travel). Hence, this novel (and his other writings) represent, in many respects, the outgrowth of his reading, which appears to be extensive. Interestingly, there is not much evidence of television's influence, except in a marginal sense, as in the influence of the video game Dungeons and Dragons.

Bradley's teachers considered him to be a "different" student; they saw him as a gifted writer but also as a social isolate with few close friends. Horobin found him difficult to talk to and, over the course of several interviews, she had difficulty getting him to talk openly about his writing. In a number of encounters with him over the course of my two years in

the school, I found him to be friendly and effusive about his writing. Moreover, in the six interviews I had with him, I soon discovered a style of writing which involved the development of numerous first drafts with little or no editing of these drafts. However, his discussion of ideas for writing was vital and interesting. His ability to talk about the development of topics for writing was, in my judgment, of above-average ability. It wasn't the case that Bradley didn't recognize the need to revise or edit his writing. In one interview, I was able to raise issues about the need to clarify a problem in his novel. In his novel, Bradley disclosed that Ashet had driven his car to the airport but walked back. When I asked him why he had acted in this manner, Bradley immediately recognized the need to explain Ashet's actions in this situation (See Horobin, 1989, pp. 94-95). Hence, Bradley could see the need to clarify but did not because the need to finish the novel superseded the need to revise parts of the text.

2. Danusia: Is a grade six student whose first language is Polish. The family has been in Canada since Danusia was six years of age so that, basically, Danusia has received all her formal schooling in Canada. She speaks English fluently and writes in a clear and concise manner. Her teachers describe her as "an excellent student" and a "very skilled writer". Other comments which her teachers have made concerning her performance in class are that she is a "prolific reader, someone who works hard at her many interests and who has several friends."

Danusia is, in physical appearance, a tall girl with long brown hair pulled back from her face and woven into a single braid". My impressions of her are of a serious, mature individual who shares information in quiet but accommodating manner. She is a bit shy but quite articulate. Above all, I found her too be a reflective person; someone who is able to talk freely about her writing and her reading interests. She and Bradley were two students in the group of seven who both wrote at home as well as at school.

3. Nate: is a grade five student who has blonde hair and blue eyes and while he is rather short for his age, he has a sturdy physique. He is cooperative, works well individually and is able, his teachers say, to work with others in small group situations. He gets along well with his peers. At times, however, he manifests some anxiety but uses talk as a basis for overcoming his nervousness in giving talks (i.e., class reports) in front of large groups of students. He is an avid reader; he reports having read all of the Eric Wilson books and Tolkien's Lord of the Rings Trilogy. In addition, he is presently creating his own Dungeons and Dragons game.

Nate's parents have just recently divorced and it was evident that he has been having some difficulty in adjusting to this disruption of the family. However, his teachers report that he appears willing to talk about this situation and the school feels that he is managing the adjustment in a satisfactory manner. Nate's ability to be verbally articulate

about his reading and writing were some of the relevant attributes of his personality.

4. Jean-Paul: presents as a well-travelled, worldly student. My interview with him was insightful, both in terms of seeing how a child with an interest in science viewed reading and how he actually responded to narrative text. Recently Jean-Paul won a major award at the City Science Fair. His research study examined mole development on Male Caucasians between the ages of 5 and 12. It would appear he has this ongoing interest in research because of the influence of his father who is a medical researcher at the University Hospital.

Jean-Paul is a fluent reader; he reports enjoying reading very much and his understanding of reading reflects a keen but analytic approach to text. His teachers, in this regard, saw a need for Jean-Paul to "develop a greater depth of understanding and broader range of issues". At the same time, they felt that he "sometimes lacks sensitivity in his reading". What this seems to suggest is that Jean-Paul reads text in an "efferent" manner. "Aesthetic" stances toward text might, for Jean-Paul, be unrewarding because they might detract from the information that he, the reader, would want to take away from his reading.

Analysis of Responses

The primary focus of the analyses will be directed toward two of the four subjects selected for this study: Bradley and Danusia. However, Jean-Paul and Nate will be introduced into

the discussion of the results wherever it is felt their comments lend support to the findings or where, in some cases, their comments contradict or counter findings about the two key informants. The form this analysis will take will be to use the comments of the two key informants as a springboard for talking about the response process. The theoretical framework utilized for the analysis will be drawn from Beach's 'discourse conventions' (1985), from Rosenblatt's (1980, 1985) transactional view of reading, and from some tentative views on 'possible worlds' as described by Bruner (1986), Coates (1990), and Margolin (1987), amongst others.

The analyses will focus on four aspects of the data collected: the response information gained from the "insights into reading" questionnaire; the response to the chapter reading from The Great Gilly Hopkins; the response to Ten Terrific Tips for Buying a Ten Speed; and, the response to a piece of each student's personal writing (See Appendix D).

Bradley's Views on Reading

During the month of June, 1989, Bradley was interviewed at his school by the researcher. The interview lasted for approximately 90 minutes and consisted of an interview of his views on reading, followed by the response interviews discussed previously.

This first interview was instructive in that it gave the examiner some important insights into Bradley's stance with

respect to a number of relevant aspects of the reading process (e.g. What does a person have to know to be able to read? How would you teach someone to read? When you are reading, what goes on in your mind?).

Generally, the view that Bradley gives to others is that he is pragmatic when it comes to conceptualizing the reading process (or reading act). For example, in response to the question dealing with what one has to do to be a good reader, Bradley's reply reflected a rather traditional view: "You have to learn basically how to read words - then you just have to read". He adds a caveat, ". . . if you enjoy it you can get good at it."

The follow-up question helped to provide further information on how one should learn to read: "If some one asked you how they should learn to read, what advice would you give them?"

> Bradley:"Well, I'm not really sure about . . . cause . . . well, I guess I'd just tell them you don't learn everything . . . learn the alphabet . . . learn some basic words, then just get someone to teach you. I don't know."

It is this 'stance marking' (Bruner, 1986) in Bradley's reply that gives us a clue to his view on reading and, perhaps more importantly, to his views on the nature of knowledge; that knowledge has an element of uncertainty to it, that it is open to interpretation and requires further thought. Furthermore, his comments here reveal that, for Bradley, learning to read is too complex a phenomenon to be explained away with a simple response. Hence, his adoption of a tentative stance suggest that he too, is interested in knowing more about this process

called reading. In a sense, Bradley appears caught somewhere between a traditional view (i.e., learning a few words and practising) which he feels is inadequate to describe this process and his willingness to know more. He is, in effect, "negotiating the world of wonder and possibility" (Bruner, 1986, p. 126). Moreover, when pressed further on this point, he replied:

> Well, you need to understand the language. You need to understand what things mean. You need to be able to; read all the letters and everything. Know the alphabet - I don't know. You just have to sort of think about what you're reading.

Bradley is, essentially, willing to concede that reading can be explained from a logical, reductionistic point of view. Knowing the letters, knowing the language, and knowing what things mean are all part of his view of the reading process. What is relevant here, though, is that "knowing the letters" is subordinated to knowing what things mean. In his view, knowing and thinking are the more important aspects of what it takes to be a good reader.

Another question related to inquiring what the reader should do when meaning is lost; what one should do if one failed to know what a word meant or what a sentence or passage was about. What I wanted to discover here was if Bradley's responses reflected what other (more empirical) studies had found. In Bradley's case, his words give us some important insights as to what good readers do when difficulties with text are encountered:

> Well, when I don't understand I usually like to try to find out. Go ask someone or look it up or something 'cause I'm a pretty curious person. I like to know what things mean.

Furthermore, in cases where he failed to grasp a minor point in a story,

Bradley reported, that,

> . . . I keep reading or sometimes I just put down the book and . . . what just happened here (?) . . . try to puzzle it all out. If I still can't I just read it over again until I finally get it.

Thus, for Bradley, rereading (revisiting) a text is an important aspect of recovering meaning that is lost or perhaps not found in the first pass through a text. This 'looking back', it would appear, is an integral weapon in the good reader's repertoire for examining text when meaning is lost. Another finding that emerged from the analysis was the enjoyment in the reading act was considered an important aspect of reading for all four informants. While this is an expected discovery and one which should surprise none, it is a point worth noting. For the good reader, there is pleasure to be found in reading a book whereas for poor readers there is the constant complaint that they are being forced to do something that is against their better judgment (Labercane, Nelson & Foster, 1984). In sum, for those who read well, reading is "fun", a "nice way to get entertainment". This study cannot, of course, provide reasons as to why we get this disparity in attitude between good and poor readers, at least not without running the risk of being too obvious in making such a claim, or of making a superficial

claim. Perhaps a weak claim cold be advanced that the very act of being involved in a pleasurable activity from an early age helps readers become better at reading through sustaining the pleasurable aspects of this activity. All this notwithstanding, perhaps enjoyment is one of the key aspects in helping young readers become involved in the world of the text.

From Bradley's perspective, this interest and enjoyment in reading is tied to his engagement in the act of reading. The following example helps to sustain this belief:

> Let's see . . . I'm about in the middle of this book. So, so far so and so has been murdered. I wonder who murdered him. (So I) sort of try to figure out what's going on . . like try to figure out the mystery and stuff . . . . After that I keep reading and then I'm pretty interested like to get to the end of the book so I can figure whether I was right.

In this sequence in which he talks about his interest in reading, Bradley appears as a reader who formulates tentative hypotheses about events in the text and then reads to confirm or disconfirm the viability of his picture of events in the story. In this respect, this reflects a schema-theoretic view of the reader's process (Pearsons, 1984).

Another way of characterizing Bradley's reading is to borrow a phrase from Bruner (1986), that something in the text "triggers" an interpretation on his part and it is this interpretation that then dominates his own creation of the "virtual text" (p.6). For Bradley, this seems tied to the particular text he is reading. At the same time, though there is the question of interpretation and it is here that we can see

Bradley examining texts from a multiplicity of perspectives. Hence, while the actual text may remain unchanged, the virtual text changes constantly. And it is these shifting perspectives which come to the fore in Bradley's talk about his writing. For example, in the discussion leading up to his reading of his own work, we find that he is quite animated and talks incessantly about the generation of ideas for his writing. This will be dealt with later when we look at his patterns of response to his own literary texts.

From another perspective, that of Rosenblatt (1984, 1985), Bradley's stance can be seen as a aesthetic one. The foregoing quote illustrates this nicely for it shows that he is not interested in getting the facts that are part of mystery. Rather, it is his involvement in the mystery story that allows him to adopt a more aesthetic stance and to be transformed through this lived experience with the narrative. In sum, because he is willing to be tentative, to consider possibilities, Bradley opens up the text, as it were, and finds himself in a possible world where space ships can land on one's roof and where creatures with superhuman powers can perform incredible deeds and, at the same time, can become one's own best friend.

Response to: The Homecoming (From: The Great Gilly Hopkins, Paterson, 1978).

Bradley was first asked to read the chapter and then to provide a written response to what he had read. In a sense what

we get here is a retrospective account rather than an introspective or on-line think aloud. Following this, he was asked to tell, in his own words, what the chapter was about. As one can readily see, what is being called for here is not a "lived through" experience; rather, a "what was it like" scenario which more aptly describes the technique being used to get at Bradley's reactions to what he had just finished reading.

The response represents what Dias (1988) calls a paraphrasing-phrasing pattern of responding. Within this pattern, what one gets is a retelling of the text in one's own words. Bradley's approach to the text is largely serial and analytic. There are gaps in his account but this is not unexpected. Not all events can be recalled; rather what the paraphraser has to do is to get the events in some sort of proper sequence. The language of the written account (and the oral retelling of that account) testify as to its analytic character:

> OK! This story is about Gilly Hopkins, a foster child moving from house to house. She's with a woman named Trotter and a man named Mr. Randolph as well as a little boy named William Edward or W.E.. They're all sick except for Gilly. Mr. Randolph is afraid his lawyer son will come and take him to Virginia. Gilly is tired . . . fatigued because she has to stay home from school to look after them. Then the door bell rings. At first she thinks it's Mr. Randolph's son. Then she decides it must be someone from school. It turns out to be a woman who claims to be her grandmother. Then W.E. comes down and calls for Gilly because he has wet his pants. She takes him up to his room. Then Trotter asks if anyone's downstairs. She tells Trotter no. Later, Trotter comes down and finds Gilly and her

> grandmother with great surprise. (Bradley, June, 1989).

There is in this account, the use of paraphrase to retell the events in the story. Use of such linguistic devices as 'then', 'at first' signal us that events in the story have happened in a particular order and here they are. However, despite the use paraphrase, there is some evidence to show that Bradley has transformed the text somewhat. That Mr. Randolph "is afraid" and Gilly "tired . . . fatigued" represent transformations of the original text and suggest that Bradley has gained some insights into the dramatic events in this account. At the same time, however, I was amazed that neither Bradley nor three other informants caught the humour evident in the scene where Trotter comes downstairs to put the turkey in the oven and collapses on Gilly. Obviously, the mental picture created of this enormous woman falling on top of Gilly who can then only whisper as she struggles to remove herself from the Mountain of Maime, "Get Off! is one which did not capture the attention of the informants in the study.

Perhaps the problem with Bradley's response has nothing to do with his response but more with the manner in which the response was generated. Using Rosenblatt's (1980) nomenclature, Bradley's response generally reflects an efferent stance but at the same time it shows some attempt on his part to come to grips with the deeper issues which confront Gilly. Bradley recognizes, for one, that this is an ordeal for Gilly. He sees her fear but recognizes that this fear may be the result of

fatigue. Even his observation that Gilly does not castigate W.E. for his 'accident' but "takes him up to his room" suggests a deeper level of sensitivity to the relationship than is evident on the surface. So in a sense, Bradley is beginning to develop a relationship to the characters in the story. Bradley has begun to make the move, as a reader, from an efferent to a more aesthetic stance in his reaction to the text.

When asked to picture the events in the story, Bradley's response was to again give a listing (in serial order) of the pictures that went through his mind as he recalled the story:

> Well, like I pictured this woman who's her grandmother, you know, . . . her hair is long and her hat and everything. And I could picture the baby throwing up and I could picture the people coming to the door.

Now although what we see here is limited in scope, it does represent an attempt by Bradley to create a poem out of a text and as Rosenblatt (1978) states, "The creation of a poem out of a text must be active, self-ordering and self-correcting process" (p.11).

Similar kinds of responses are to be found in Nate and Jean-Paul's responses. For example, Nate's response reflects a transformation of the original work with its inclusion of current jargon:

> Well, it was a week before thanksgiving and this girl's father was always sick in bed with the flu and she was really kind of uptight about it and finally . . . and then this lady came in . . . and I wasn't really clear about whether it was the guy who was sick . . . which I think it was, or the mother. And I don't think she had seen either of them for a

> while . . . . And the kids didn't know it was their grandmother and she got all cloudy and I guess she was just trying to make a comeback . . . to get into their life again . . . and it wasn't her that left. It was the mother or father that left. And that's just about what I think the chapter was about.

This account would, in schema-theoretic terms (Anderson & Pearson, 1984) represent a case where the reader's background knowledge interfered with the most likely interpretation of events in the text. Here, the reader's schema intruded itself into the textual meaning provided by the author, Mr. Randolph, being a retired man and black, is hardly a likely candidate as father, either for Gilly or W.E.. Nate also confuses Mame for Gilly's mother but this is an understandable confusion; she could easily be seen as Gilly's mother despite the fact that she doesn't recognize the visitor as her mother.

Despite these obvious sources of confusion, Nate does transform the text's meaning. He does understand that Gilly is out of sorts (uptight) and he does understand that the lady who rings the doorbell is trying to get back into Gilly's life (trying to make a comeback).

> First her family was sick and she had to take care of them. Then the lady came to the door and she claimed
> . .. and came in and she cried and then told her, her story . . that she thought she (Gilly) was her (grand) daughter.

Once again there are inaccuracies but there is no mistaking the efferent tone of this response. The account reads like an experiment: First . . . then . . . and she claimed . . . and she cried . . . and then . . . . In Rosenblatt's view,

efferent (from the Latin _efferre_, "to carry away") reading is that kind of reading in which the reader's attention is directed toward what is to be retained _after_ the reading act. In Jean-Paul's case, then, his reading was concerned with "selecting out the desired referent and ignoring or subordinating effects" (1984, p. 388). Jean-Paul reads like a scientist but he comes by this approach to the reading act honestly. He cannot take an aesthetic stance; like his father his focus is on factual information and its logical organization. The question that arises here is: how can we encourage readers like Jean-Paul to adopt an aesthetic stance? What kinds of experiences can we provide that will encourage a more affective response to narrative text?

Response to: "Ten Terrific Tips For Buying a Ten Speed"

Having just completed a reading of _Gilly_, Bradley was next given a piece of expository text to read. What one would expect here is an efferent stance to this piece of text. The question, then, is not whether he will read this text from an efferent point of view but whether in fact he will also adopt a somewhat aesthetic stance. This is what good readers should do for, after all, they should build in some sense of excitement that is aesthetic as well as efferent. Riding a bike isn't just knowing the specifications for buying a bike. We should then look for signs of this reflective stance toward buying a ten speed.

As a lead-in to the reading of the article, Bradley was asked to "brainstorm" the topic of buying a bicycle. The

examiner then recorded Bradley's thoughts as he free associated about the topic of buying a bicycle.

In contrast to a strictly "efferent" response, Bradley's answer was characterized by his ability to transform the information, to examine the article both efferently and aesthetically. To illustrate initial comments which surfaced dealt with "tests" which the prospective buyer could initiate to find out if the bike was in good working order. These were reported as "ways to test": i.e. taking it for a test drive to ensure that the frame wasn't crooked; driving the bike through some water to find out if the front and back wheels were properly aligned; stopping suddenly to ensure that the brakes worked properly; and, finally, going for a ride with the bike in order to test the complete range of gears.

Bradley's subsequent comments were concerned with advice that a friend gave about buying a favourite brand (e.g. a Raleigh). This was followed in turn by comments about bike prices with a final comment about brand names and how one shouldn't be influenced by them.

What one finds omitted from this discussion is a lack of reference to a description of the bicycle (which was provided in the opening paragraph) and to the subsequent discussion, provided in the second paragraph, which deals with how a ten speed functions. In effect, what Bradley's response reveals it that effective efferent reading focuses on the relevant information in the text, to information that is keyed to the

title and the subheads.

Similar results were found in the responses offered by Jean-Paul and Nate. Both Jean-Paul and Nate focused their responses on the tests one might employ before actually purchasing a ten-speed bike. Again, what these two students did was to take away from the text information that dealt with the main points of the article. They did not feel constrained to take away everything; their stance toward the text, while it was efferent, was decidedly selective and efficient.

Nate, in keeping with the trends of the day, stated that he preferred a bike with 18 gears as opposed to the 10-speed bike discussed in the article. Here, we have an aesthetic response on display. Jean-Paul's response, on the other hand, was strictly efferent in its tone. His interest is in factual information and, therefore, his stance reflected that interest.

On the aesthetic level, Bradley's response to this article is more like Nate's in terms of comments that indicate that he is not strictly attuned to the information one takes away from the text. For example, he reports that he had a bike but that it is only a five-speed. Correspondingly, he talked at some length about the fact that he liked riding his bike and that he would enjoy riding a new bike. Hence, in addition to his efferent stance, Bradley provided some evidence that he was adopting an aesthetic stance to the article; a finding that is in keeping with Rosenblatt's claim that effective reading is concerned with striking a balance between these two polarities.

Response to Bradley's own Compositions: The California Kidnapping and Selected Writings.

Although Bradley was invited to read only one of his pieces of writing, the discussion with him prior to the reading was concerned primarily with a number of texts he had produced. To sort out these pieces of text, I decided to highlight The California Kidnapping since it was the text he read aloud but to also include his discussion of his other works since they seemed to be of equal importance and interest to him.

In laying the groundwork for this part of the study, I first asked him to comment generally about his writing. For example, he was asked to tell how he elected topics for writing and how this had influenced his present choice of topic. Bradley's response to this first question was to gesture by pointing to his head and say, "somewhere up here".

This evident truism tended to belie the fact that while the ideas came from his own head, he was also influenced to a great extent by his own personal reading, especially his reading of Tolkien and his more recent interest in Piers Anthony[1] - a writer of Juvenile fiction and fantasy. What is of note here is that many of Bradley's plots in his various novels owe their form to Anthony's novels. However, despite these evident borrowings, there is a quality and uniqueness to Bradley's writings that is both innovative and reflective of a mature

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[1]. Piers Anthony (1984). Crewel lye: A caustic yarn. New York: Ballantine Books.

writing style.

One way of analyzing Bradley's can be found in the research of Mikkelson (1985). In her work, she collected stories from 15 Greenville, North Carolina children, aged seven to ten and a half years, of average to above-average intellectual ability and socio-economic level. Of the seventy-seven stories collected, fifty-two were based on literary materials.

Based on the degree of literary influence exhibited in each story, five broad categories emerged from her analyses: retelling, borrowing, blending, re-creating, and transforming. For purposes of our analysis, the category of transforming is of special interest. Young writers whose stories fall into this category create texts in which "the theme is dramatized with new characters or a traditional character type, such as a dwarf, in a new plot" (p. 190). In a transformed story, then, the thematic scaffolding of the old story is generally what appears in the young child's writing. What has happened, though, is that the elements of the old plot have been recycled in a manner to create, as it were, a new text. Thus, "The California Kidnapping" represents, on the surface, a reconstituted Piers Anthony story. But, in a real sense, it is no longer an Anthony tale; rather, it is a Bradley tale, an amalgam of Anthony, Tolkien, Dungeons and Dragons, and Bradley's own world view (as an eleven-year-old). Bradley's text is, therefore, a transformed text; a piece of literature which has its own tale to tell.

In "The California Kidnapping", (and in his other writings) one finds this curious mixture of Tolkien with Anthony; where odd use is made of archaic expressions which are delivered by secret agents who in turn are fighting aliens from another world. As it stands, Bradley's text fits Mikkelson's nomenclature of text that is transformed.

The Semantic-Pragmatic Interface: A Possible Worlds Analysis

In borrowing Coates' (1990) title and her method of analysis, I want to be able to show how modality is used by my young speakers as part of their spontaneous talk about the texts they have read and the views they have expressed about the act of reading. In so doing, I hope to show how the utterances of real speakers in real situations can be more fully explicated and can be used as a basis for arguing for the fact that these individuals have moved from their talk about their everyday experiences with the possible worlds of text. As an example, let me begin with Bradley:

> (1) (Bradley) to be a good reader you . . . have to learn basically how to read words, then you just have to read.

Question: If someone asked how they should learn to read, what advice would you give them?

> (2) Well, I'm not really sure about that 'cause . . . well, I guess I'd just tell them you don't learn

everything . . . learn the alphabet . . . learn some basic words then just get someone to teach you. I don't know.

Question: Can you describe how it feels to be "in a story"?

(3) Well, when I was reading "Lord of the Rings" last year . . . I got so involved in the book, I imagined I was there . . . .

Here we see some examples of how Bradley has, in Coate's terms qualified the categorical by talking about the possible world of Lord of the Rings. He does so through the use of the mood of the verb to express model meaning. These uses are reflected in such forms as "I guess", "I imagined", or simply "I don't know". Basically, it is Bradley's use of modal auxiliaries which suggest his ability to conceptualize parallel worlds. Even response (1) has an element of obligation: to be a good reader you have to read. Knowing words is, in and of itself, not sufficient.

Another problem which confronts the reader is how to situate the ordinary discourse into the framework of this arcane language. To illustrate, compare these two pieces of text:

Nigelius: "I thinks this sword be fit for me."

Later he says: "he thinks I make quite some money in my business"

Readers will, in some cases, find this unacceptable. Others will see the developing writer and others will see the humour in what Bradley is attempting here. As readers generally, though,

we can see the invitation clearly: we are invited to invent hypotheses about the text and, in so doing, create multiple perspectives from which to examine this world. As visitors, our interest should be concerned with where the writer is taking us. Will the quest be successful? What adventures lie ahead?

Within the context of possible world semantics character is viewed as signifying an individual, designated by means of proper name, pronoun, or (in)definite noun phrase, who is included in or is a member of some nonfactual state of affairs or possible world (Margolin, 1987, p. 108). Margolin states, further, that this individual (within this nonfactual world) can be referred to, located in space-time points, and ascribed human-like properties and relations. In addition, such an individual may be described an "interiority" or personhood.

An examination of Bradley's text demonstrates that the central character in his novel fits the criteria for identification laid down by Margolin. Ousane is, in many respects, a believable character despite his use of arcane language. He does engage in dialogue with other characters. Other characters in the story refer to him. He has a history in that we are told that his father was a blacksmith. And although is called a dwarf, he has enough of the human qualities to fit the description of "personhood". The time period (i.e. A.D.) helps to fit him within a time-space continuum. Moreover, the events which are described help to give Ousane a sense of interiority.

Ousane is, in many respects, a figure out of an Arthurian legend. Given Bradley's reading of Tolkien, this character can be seen as the extension of Tolkien's characters. In general, though, readers must ask themselves: if the author has established Ousane's membership in a text world and if we, as readers know what Ousane is like. Moreover, are we aware (in our reading) that there are different individuals in this possible world? What kind of individual is Ousane? Does Ousane remain the same throughout the story? Finally, one of the questions we could ask Bradley is: Can you describe Ousane to me? Of course this is not always possible and the reader is required to construct a picture of the character from the subtle clues provided by the author.

Case Study Number 2: Danusia

Of the four students interviewed, Danusia is the most mature. This maturity is most evident in the responses she provided to the questions posed in the initial phase of the interview but it is also evident in her discussion throughout the reading of the two passages and in the reading of her own text. To illustrate, in response to the question: What do you think a person has to do to be a good reader?, she replied, "Know what type of stories they like to read . . what they're interested in and that sort of thing . . know what they really want to read . . . ."

What one sees in this response is an interest in books, in

reading preferences, with an emphasis on the aesthetic in reading. Her response to the follow-up question having to do with giving advice on how one should learn how to read is equally mature. Initially, she begins by stating that one should look at words and learn the alphabet. However, she does not stop there but continues on to say that one should first look at books to see what the words look like and that even if they need to learn the alphabet, they need to start with (easier) books. Reading, for Danusia, is captured by the following statement she made during the interview:

> "Understand the words that you're reading so you can read the words and I think understand what they mean"

Other comments reflect this mature understanding of reading:

D: Sometimes I don't understand but usually if I read on I will understand . . . sometimes it's a whole paragraph that sort of, to me, is off topic and I don't understand how it fits . . . I just read on in the sentence and see if I can figure out what it might mean or I use the dictionary to find out what the word means . . . .

When asked about her attitude to reading, Danusia replied that she liked to read,

> To see what's happening in books. I sometimes when I have nothing to do I just like to read 'cause it's fun. It gets my schoolwork better, I think, when I read. Especially my comprehension and vocabulary . . . .

E: Do you have any particular kind of book that you like to read?

D: I like to read about school situations . . about people. I like to read about people and made-up stories . . . if it's based on a true story, it sounds sort of impossible to me sometimes . . that it will happen . . . I just sort of like more made-up stories.

E: Are you thinking of a particular story?

D: Probably when I read "The Diary of Anne Frank" . . it was a

shock, kind of, to read a book that could happen, and how she died.

E: Tell me more

D: I like it when my mom reads to me . . . ' cause I can imagine what's happening in the story.

E: And? What do you think of next?

D: Sometimes I feel like I'm in a story when somebody . . when a character really fits my interest and things, and sometimes I imagine I'm that person but not always.

When one examines these comments, the picture of Danusia that emerges is that of an articulate and thoughtful person who enjoys reading but for some very definite reasons. As in the case of the three other students, Danusia enjoys reading, particularly fiction. Moreover, on the basis of her own descriptions of her reading, one could assume that she reads strategically and for meaning.

Response to "The Visitor" from the Great Gilly Hopkins

One of the reasons for analyzing Danusia's response separately from the other three respondents is that she had read the entire novel before engaging in this revisit of one chapter from that novel. What I anticipated was that her knowledge of the entire text would produce a somewhat different kind of response; a response tempered by her ability to contextualize what happened in one chapter - the events, the conversation, the inner thoughts of the main character, Gilly.

In her first recall (What pictures did you form in your mind when you read the chapter?), Danusia immediately focused on Agnes, who is not mentioned in the chapter but who occupies a

central role in the story as a foil for Gilly. Moreover, Agnes is such an unusual character that it is understandable that she would be recalled. Danusia, for example, talked about the "details about Agnes . . . and how she came to the classroom dressed in shabby clothes".

Danusia also talked about the chapter in terms of her reading of the whole novel - how she read the book as part of her involvement in Community of Readers; part of that involvement being a small group discussion of the readings and writing a summary (a reflective commentary) at the end of each chapter read. Thus, Danusia's response to the chapter was a response to the whole story. In other words, she viewed the chapter she had read within the macrocosm of the story itself. This is clearly illustrated in her follow-up comments where she mentions the letter Gilly received from her mother and her mother's picture; a picture which, in some senses, served as the driving force sustaining Gilly as she was shunted from foster home to foster home.

Gilly's attempts to steal money from Trotter are motivated by her desire to get to San Francisco and to be with her mother. Danusia reports on this and on the fact that Gilly's picture of her mother as young and beautiful only lends a further air of mystery to the reason why Gilly has been abandoned and left to shift for herself.

On the basis of Danusia's description of these events it is clear that she senses the import of these events for Gilly.

Danusia also understands the significance of the visit from Gilly's grandmother. As she states:

" . . . she always thought that her mother would be beautiful and everything and that she wouldn't really have a grandmother but when the grandmother comes then Gilly doesn't want to go to her mother but she does . . . . "

The foregoing comment sums up the events at the end of the story. In it is contained Gilly's "change of heart" about Mame Trotter; the once hated foster mother is now someone she has let into her life, someone she can now trust and, for the first time, love. As Danusia states, "maybe the personality (of the grandmother) might be the same as the mother . . .then she doesn't want to go where she thinks she might have to live with her grandmother and you can tell that she really doesn't want to."

What Danusia has done then, is to see the events of this chapter within the larger context of the major events in the story. This, in turn, has produced a different kind of response. The events in the chapter take on added significance. Gilly's willingness to care for others represents a radical change in her character from the cold-hearted and scheming girl who wants to steal money to go to California to someone who takes complete charge of the household and cares for Trotter, W.E. and Mr. Randolph.

As Danusia declares, "I liked the whole story." Hence, for her, the chapter is seen, not as a separate entity but rather as

part of a whole. What Danusia has successfully done is to integrate the events of a single chapter into her world view of the possible world of the Great Gilly Hopkins.

Response to: Ten Terrific Tips for Buying A Ten Speed

As in the other three responses, Danusia's reading of the article exhibits, clearly, an efferent stance toward this piece of text. As she declares:

> " . . . what type you should buy. Um, some of the tests you can do on it to get a good deal and not look for the cheap ones 'cause the cheap ones are defective . . . . Probably I'd buy a good bike."

When asked about what sorts of things one might look for in purchasing a good bike, she replied:

> "Probably if it fits me . . . . If it feels comfortable when I'm riding it. Not the type of tire . . . probably the pedals, how they move . . . the seat, if it's comfortable and the height of the handlebars . . . . Probably how fast it can go. Does it stop good? Things like that."

As is evident, Danusia has the ability to take away the relevant information from the text while, at the same time, ignoring redundant information or information that does not have a direct bearing the main thesis of the article.

Response to her own story: "At Camp"

Danusia's story is eight chapters long and is concerned with a grade six class field trip to a camp setting in the foothills of Western Canada. The chapters are clearly marked and the story contains a great deal of dialogue, most of it involving a girl who is the focus of attention throughout the novel. All the events in the story seem to be tied to the actions of this one

girl as she encounters others in the story. The surroundings and the actual setting play only minor roles in this account.

The dialogue is surprisingly well done and it helps to sustain the story. To illustrate, Amanda infuriates Tracy (the central character in the story) by taking some gum out of her purse without her permission. The conflict is described solely through the use of dialogue. Later, Danusia has Tracy 'get even' by suggesting to Amanda that she needs to lose weight:

"Have you visited the weight loss clinic lately?" She knew that Amanda was slightly overweight. Amanda looked at them. "No, I don't need to." "You don't?" Amy looked surprised. Then both girls giggled.

Here, Danusia's use of indirect speech acts is very effective in that it helps to convey a deeper level of meaning than is evident in the surface level constructions. Moreover, the incident portrayed in the conversation reveals Danusia's understanding of discourse conventions at the level particularly of intended perlocutionary effects. What is also evident, too, is Danusia's attempts to show her main character in a believable light as, for example, when Tracy falls into a pile of wood and gets stuck. Above all, Danusia's effective use of talk in her story reveals her ability to use dialogue for "symbolic purposes to imply meaning."

In reflecting on her use of dialogue in her writing, Danusia states:

> . . . if I didn't have conversation, the story would drag and it wouldn't get going . . . . Like I . . . don't think

> it would sound good that Tracy hoped her hair wouldn't catch on fire. I think it sounds better when . . . Amy, I hope my hair doesn't catch on fire. Tracy talking that 'cause it sounds more real.

A Possible Worlds Analysis

In the four examples listed below are clues to the reader's use of modality in rather subtle ways:

(1) Examiner: Is looking at a picture reading?

Bradley: I don't think so. I mean I suppose you could say it was because . . . well, I mean sometimes pictures say something . . . you get some idea from seeing a picture . . . .

(2) Examiner: What might Gilly look like?

Jean-Paul: She's big. Probably have red hair . . . and she'd be sort of tough looking ' cause she's run away from institutes . . . probably wear blue jeans . . . ripped jeans and shirt . . . .

(3) Examiner: What does a person have to do to be a good reader?

Nate: Practice, I think . . . . You have to read a lot and you have to be a good speller, I think . . . . Well, I think reading helps you with your spelling.

(4) Examiner: What is it you need to know to be able to read?

Danusia: Understand the words that you're reading so you can read the words and I think understand what they mean.

In three of the four examples listed above we have evidence of each respondent's use of epistemic modality where the

linguistic forms employed indicate the speakers' lack of commitment to the truth of the propositions expressed in the utterance each of them produced. Another way to look at these utterances is to see each speaker adopting a tentative stance towards their own particular view of reading.

In Jean-Paul's utterance, however, deontic meaning is evident, conveying a certain ambiguity concerning the truth of his proposition. The picture he has constructed of Gilly is, of course, based on his reading of the chapter and we can interpret his utterance as meaning roughly, "I think it's possible (given what I've read) that she looks like X."

Another example, this time from a fuller version, should help us examine modal meaning as it is employed by Bradley.

Examiner: What sort of pictures went through your mind as you were reading this story?

Bradley: Well, like I pictured this woman who's her grandmother, you know. She describes how . . . how her hair is long and her hat and everything. And I pictured the baby throwing up and I could picture people coming to the door. Oh, it must be Mr. Randolph's son or it could be so and so from school. I don't know.

Examiner: How do you think this story came to be?

Bradley: Well, I guess, like since she's moving from house to house she's here and then there's flu or something and all these people are catching it.

Examiner: Now is Gilly moving from house to house as the people get sick or is she looking after them?

Bradley: I'm not sure.

Examiner: OK. What do you think's going to happen next?

Bradley: Well, I guess . . . I suppose her grandmother could take her away and then they'd have to get someone else to care for the people or she could just stay there until they get

better. I don't know.

In this example, we have both speakers exploiting the subtleties of the English modal system, using expressions such as 'think' and 'know' or 'don't know' to reveal the tentativeness of their respective stances concerning the text under discussion. Both are talking in terms of the realm of the possible, of the possible world created by Paterson when she created Gilly.

What is also relevant here is that their jointly produced utterances mark their commitment to work together to produce a shared interpretation of the text. By inviting Bradley to picture the events in the story, the examiner is inviting him into the world of Gilly. And, as one can see by looking at Bradley's talk about Gilly, that there is a sparsity in the 'world' he has constructed. I think this is understandable given that he would need the richness of the whole story in order to gain a complete picture of its main character.

Sensitivity to the discourse world of Gilly in its totality, is provided by Danusia in the following:

E: Why is it that once she sees the grandmother, she doesn't want to go back?

D: Maybe the personality might be the same as the mother so she doesn't really want to . . . . then she doesn't want to go where she thinks she might have to live with her grandmother and you can tell that she really doesn't want to.

E: Did the story, later on, say that?

D: That she didn't want to?

E: That she thought that perhaps her mother would like her grandmother?

D: A little bit. In some parts there were hints that she doesn't want to go and that she doesn't like her grandmother.

In the foregoing, the conversation represents a jointly-constructed effort by both speakers and, where meaning is lost, attempts to repair the conversation are often not entirely successful, as the example illustrates. Nevertheless, Danusia's reply reveals her use of modal meaning to express her feelings of ambivalence, of uncertainty about Gilly's actions.

Another element at work here is that speakers "modify what they say in the light of who they are talking to" (Coates, 1990, p. 60). Bell (1984) calls this phenomenon of addressee-orientation 'Audience Design'. Coates, in adopting Bell's term, makes the point that speakers use different styles in different contexts as appropriate. As one can see in the foregoing example, Danusia uses the polite form of a question to the examiner when, in response to a question from the examiner, she replies with another question, requesting clarification:

E: Did the story later on say that?

D: That she didn't want to...?

The notion of Audience Design is useful in that it helps to account for the speaker's use of modality and the speaker's sensitivity to the needs of the addressee. Brown and Levinson (1987) refer to such strategies as 'face needs' which comprise the need not to be imposed on and the need to be approved. This is illustrated in the following:

E: Let's take a look at a piece of writing. What have you brought today for your writing?

D: Ok. This story doesn't have a title but I have to, I'm going to have to think of one soon but right now I just call it "A Cat", a cat story. Eight Chapters.

It is in this somewhat hesitant reply that Danusia's character shows itself. There is an element of subservience evident here and a corresponding element of tentativeness concerning her writing. As yet, the story does not have a title; Danusia's stance is such that she is not yet fully committed to the world she has created. Perhaps what she is seeking from her interlocutor is approval or the need to talk to her, to build consensus and to work with that person to firm up the reality of the possible castle she is building.

HOW DO READERS AND WRITERS ENGAGE IN POSSIBLE WORD CREATION? A TENTATIVE SUMMARY

In the course of writing this paper, I attempted to use Corcoran's (1988) questions as a guide for the direction this paper would take. The first question, "How do readers make meaning?" was useful in that it allowed me to review literature on response to reading. The second question, "How do texts instruct their readers on how to read and write them?" was, I felt, equally helpful because I could talk about how young readers and writers responded to text both in terms of texts they read and texts they wrote. The third question, "How are both readers and texts the products of cultural contexts for reading and writing?" was not specifically germane to what I wanted to do, which was to summarize what I had written, and,

consequently, I decided to replace that question with the one listed above primarily because I think that it is the question of possible word creation in young readers and writers which is of central concern to this paper.

The notion of possible worlds, which was essentially a philosophical notion (at least in a technical sense), does have some important applications for a theory of response. Martin (1987) suggests that we can think of a possible world as any situation describable in a work of fiction provided that it is a situation one can describe in a consistent story.

One of the major issues with respect to the notion of fictional worlds is their ontological status (Ryan, 1984). This issue has to do with the "completeness" of fictional worlds and of fictional characters. Ryan states that, "an entity is considered ontologically complete, if, for each possible proposition p, either P or - p describes this entity" (p. 129). Moreover, since ontological completeness calls for "an infinite number of properties, the creativeness of fiction are by necessity incomplete entities" (ibid., p. 129). However, since reading is, in Iser's (1978) term a gap-filling endeavour, one would expect that fictional characters would not be fully developed. In addition, one can only wonder at text which is ontologically complete. The element of surprise would be gone. More importantly, what would be left for the reader to do?

Whatever the claims for the status of fictional worlds, it is evident that the reader's (and writer's) creation of a

possible world (or discourse possible world) provides us with a powerful heuristic for looking at ways in which readers enter possible worlds and how they behave in these possible worlds. In Particular, the reader's use of modal auxiliaries in talking about that world gives researchers insights into the nation of that journey. What seems important, too, is how the reader behaves during the time that he/she is in the text.

Implications for Classroom Practice

Talk by its very nature is dyadic in that it normally requires speaker and hearer. In like manner, when readers enter the possible world of the text, they enter into a dialogue with the author about that world. Moreover, it is the reader's ongoing dialogue which allows the observer to capture the nature of the reader's engagement with that text.

With the foregoing in mind, let me suggest the following instructional implications for consideration.

1. Readers must be willing to negotiate their way through the entire text. Teachers must take care to ensure that the reader/author transaction not be forced nor should it be terminated too quickly.

What needs to be considered here is the reader's stance to text. In the first instance, readers must be open to the text. In their initial encounters with texts, readers should be encouraged by teachers to commit themselves to the truth of the

propositions expressed within the context of the text world. I do not see this as suspending one's disbelief as much as a tentative commitment to accept the text world (i.e. the possible world) as it has been created by its author. Judgments can be made throughout about the possible world of the text or possible text world and if the world strains our sense of commitment to the believability of that world, these concerns should be taken under advisement and can be used at at later point to build a case for or against the possible world we have entered. I have raised this issue in light of suggestions by some teachers that we should teach children to abandon books that do not hold their interest. I would agree that often all of us encounter books which bore us and which we frequently choose to ignore. Nevertheless, I am concerned that what we may create in our classrooms is a kind of consumer mentality about book choice that will lead our children to become too narrow or focused in their reading. Moreover, I am convinced that encouraging children to set aside books too quickly tends to have a deleterious effect on the critical faculty of the reader.

Of course, it is important to be careful here. We need to avoid the tendency to say, "This is good for you. Read it!" Rather, we need to recognize the importance of introducing books to children in such a way that they will appreciate the struggle involved in trying to get inside the world of Anne Frank or the need to persist when dealing with the anomaly of Leslie's death in Bridge to Terabithia (Paterson, 1977).

At the risk of being prescriptive, let me offer one or two suggestions. Teachers might construct a chart and talk to their students about the guidelines suggested in the following example.

Guidelines for Visiting _____

1. a) I believe the author has an interesting story to tell me.
   b) My journey through this story will, at times, be difficult but I promise to try my best to understand what is going on.
   c) I need to share my concerns with others about what it is like to be trying to find by way through this story.
   d) I need to share my concerns with my teacher.

2. The reader's stance reflects the degree of commitment the reader has to an aesthetic reading of text. Teachers and students need to talk about how to approach a text. Here, teachers need to model appropriate stances and to discuss with students the kind of talk which is conducive to an aesthetic stance.

Stance, it would appear, reflects the reader's attitude toward a text. Readers, we would hope, are not neutral

observers. Just as speakers of a language are participants in the world who, when they encounter texts, "encode their point of view towards it" (Stubbs, 1987, I).

Readers who utilize modal forms when talking about stories they are reading reflect what Coates (1990) would term a subjective stance toward that text. They do this principally because they can see themselves as being a part of that text world. For them, the possible world they have entered is one they have imagined could exist; it is a realm of possibility where things could be otherwise than they are in the actual world. Roughly speaking, it is the reader's use of modal expressions which should provide teachers with insights into the degree of commitment the reader has to the possible world of the text. Here, expressions such as "I would imagine ...," "It seems to me that...," of "I wonder about ..."help to show teachers that adopting a tentative stance toward a piece of text is a positive marker of the student's real engagement with the story. What would help students here would be for teachers to record such talk, play it back, and talk to students about how such talk reflects the "need to adopt" a tentative stance when beginning the reading of text. What teachers should be worried about is an attitude that is too literal or dogmatic (or perhaps, too efferent). Remarks such as "I didn't like it because girls can't beat boys in foot races" reflects a very dogmatic attitude, not only to the events in the novel itself, but about the world in general.

3. Texts are transformed through the reader's engagement with that text. Teachers need to look for signs of the reader's engagement with text and to model a sense of engagement with text.

The transformation of text can be likened to Iser's (1978) notion of virtual text. The virtuality of the work, as he calls it, entails the notion that, through the reading of a piece f text, the reader somehow transforms the text tot he point where it seems "unreal," that it lives somewhere outside the realm of things we can touch and smell and measure (Evans, 1987, p.26). From the perspective of possible worlds, the reader's engagement with that text world suggest both that his perceptions of that world are bound to be affected by his own experiences and by his/her encounters of events and characters within that possible world. What this means is that in recounting his/her experiences both before, during and after, the reader will have transformed the text in order to make sense of it and to establish a degree of ownership of the text. Bruner (1986) alludes to this when he talks about the reader's attempts to put "his personal thumbprint...on the story"(p. 35).

I think texts are transformed because writers intend to create texts which discourage a standard response but, at the same time, attempt to recruit the reader's imagination. As Bruner so ably puts it,

> So, "great" storytelling, inevitably is about compelling human plights that are "accessible" to

> readers. But at the same time, the plights must be set forth with sufficient subjunctivity to allow them to be rewritten by the reader, rewritten so as to allow play for the reader's imagination. (p. 35).

In keeping with the possible worlds view, it is the reader's talk about the possible world of the text which reflects his creation and transformation of that text. Such talk is an important marker for teachers who want to know the extent to which their students are engaged with a story. Students will talk as though they are "there" in the text. the story will take on "a life of its own" and readers at all levels will deal with the exigencies that arise in the story from the context of their own experiences. Thus, in writing an "open" letter to Gilly's mother, students' compositions will reflect an urgency that is characteristic of their personal situation as an observer of Gilly's plight.

Hence, teachers who are careful observers of student talk about text will gain some important information about which books create this sense of engagement. Moreover, they will begin to gauge the extent of that engagement. That is to say, while texts engage readers, there are, I believe, differing degrees of engagement. A surface level of engagement may be readily observed. Deeper levels of engagement may call for extended observations of the students' encounters with texts. I am not so much talking here about levels as in, for example,

literal, inferential, critical levels of understandings as I am about the reader's commitment to the whole of the possible world of the text. In this respect, what teachers need to talk to students about is the journey itself. Such activities as described by Greco (1990) would be helpful for teachers to use where students could be encouraged to write responses to "fill in blanks in the text," to "explore points of view," to "reflect upon silences," or to "explore one's reading process." I can think of one additional writing activity here, one which encourages readers to reflect upon the journey itself. this would entail asking students to talk about how they initiated the exploration of the possible world of the text, how they were able (or unable) to sustain the journey through that world, and whether or not they were able to negotiate a successful exit from the world they had explored.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As Bruner (1986) puts it, "The artist creates possible worlds through the metaphoric transformation of the ordinary and the conventionally "given" (p. 49). What I have attempted to show here is that the reader, like the artist, engages with possible worlds of narrative and it is this act of engagement that is determined to some extent by the stances s/he adopts towards particular texts. And, underlying the reader's stance is his/her use of modal expressions, which allow the teacher access into the reader's degree of engagement and transformation of the possible world of the text.

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